

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.
Currently, claims 1-21 and 27-30 are pending in this application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103:

Claims 1-7, 10-13 and 16-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Burke et al (U.S. '223, hereinafter "Burke"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

For a reference to anticipate a claim, each element must be found, either expressly or under principles of inherency, in the reference. Each element of the claimed invention is not found in Burke. For example, Burke fails to disclose "each multichannel audio connection comprising a plurality of individual audio channels, and each of the plurality of terminal equipments receiving the individual audio channels through a respective one of the multichannel audio connections, each of the terminal equipments having means to separately process each received audio channel to provide a plurality of outputs, each output representing one of the other terminal equipments," as required by independent claim 1. Similar comments apply to independent claim 3. Burke also fails to disclose "in which each of the plurality of terminal equipments receives the individual audio channels through a respective one of the multichannel audio connections and processes each received individual audio channel separately to provide a plurality of outputs, such output each representing a respective one of the other terminal equipments," as required by independent claim 10. Similar comments apply to independent claim 12. Finally, Burke fails to disclose "and each of the plurality of terminal equipments receiving the individual independent monaural channels through a respective one of the multichannel

connections, each of the terminal equipments having means to separately process each received individual independent monaural channel to provide a plurality of outputs, each output representing one of the other terminal equipments,” as required by independent claim 16. Similar comments apply to independent claim 17.

Fig. 18 and cols. 26-28 (specifically identified by the Office Action) of Burke discloses converting a combined video signal and an input audio signal to a second protocol signal such as a TDMA format signal. (See step 930 in Fig. 18). In marked contrast, the present invention relates to processing audio signals. For example, independent claim 1 requires “each multichannel audio connection comprising a plurality of individual audio channels.” As another example, independent claim 16 requires “receiving the individual independent monaural channels through a respective one of the multichannel connections.”¹

Moreover, it appears that all of the relevant processing in the Burke system is performed in a bridge, as it is stated that standard terminals can be used. (See, e.g., Fig. 13). A single combined video signal is generated (see step 925 of Fig. 18 and col. 27, lines 13-15) from a number of inputs 380(a) to 380(n) (col. 27, lines 7-11). This single combined video signal is apparently sent to all participants in the second protocol signal noted above. However, none of the separate processing of audio channels as claimed takes place at the destination. As only a single RGB (video) channel is transmitted, the Burke system does not provide for separate processing of audio channels as required by the claimed invention.

¹ As commonly understood in the art, “monaural channel” relates to a single sound channel. (See page 1, lines 9-11 of the originally-filed specification).

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Dependent claim 2 requires “wherein at least one of the terminal equipments has spatialisation means to combine the outputs representing each terminal equipment to provide a spatialisation output in which each terminal equipment is represented by a virtual sound source.” Dependent claim 11 further requires “wherein the outputs are processed to generate a spatialised output in which each cooperating terminal equipment is represented by a virtual sound source.” Burke fails to disclose these limitations. Burke does not make any mention of spatialization. While these claims relate to an audio context (e.g., for spatialization), the Burke system in contrast relates to converting a combined video signal with an audio signal. Spatialization only has real meaning in the context of audio.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-7, 10-13 and 16-21 are not anticipated by Burke and thus respectfully requests that the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 be withdrawn.

Claims 8-9 and 14-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Burke in view of Ludwig (U.S. ‘539). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Since claims 8-9 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and claims 14-15 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 10, all of the comments made above with respect to these base independent claims apply equally to claims 8-9 and 14-15. Ludwig fails to remedy the above described deficiencies of Burke. Applicant thus respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 8-9 and 14-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

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New Claims:

New claims 27-30 have been added to provide additional protection for the invention. Applicant submits that these claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to their respective base claim.

Conclusion:

Applicant believes that this entire application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice to this effect. If the Examiner has any questions or believes that an interview would further prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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